

SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

January 20, 2005
NOAA Fisheries Offices
Portland, OR

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Bill Hevlin welcomed everyone to today's meeting, held January 20, 2005 at NOAA Fisheries' Portland, Oregon offices. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript of the items discussed and decisions made at today's meeting. Anyone with questions about these minutes should contact Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420.

2. Bonneville 2 Decision Document Update.

The group briefly discussed the status of the B2 decision document; one participant noted that a special FFDRWG meeting was held last week to discuss it. David Wills noted that he had distributed copies of the draft decision document to all FPAC members earlier this week, in anticipation of further discussion at next Monday's FFDRWG meeting. Hevlin said the Corps is expecting a recommendation from SCT on whether to begin funding for construction of the PH2 intake screen system improvement project. At the next FFDRWG meeting, we'll be developing a recommendation, which we will then pass on to SCT, noted another Corps participant. It was agreed to revisit this topic at the February 17 SCT meeting.

3. B2 Corner Collector PIT-Tag Detection.

Hevlin said Scott Bettin had discussed this topic at the December SCT meeting and had promised to provide an update at this meeting. Kim Fodrea said Bettin was tied up in another meeting.

4. FFDRWG/SRWG Updates.

Marvin Shuttters said there hasn't been a FFDRWG meeting since the last SCT meeting; the next scheduled Walla Walla District FFDRWG is February 2-3. Also, on February 7-11, the Corps will be leading a trip to WES to observe and discuss various modeling projects; all SCT members are welcome to come. Among the topics to be addressed at WES are the Lower Monumental RSW design, Lower Granite summer spill test patterns, and the 2005 Ice Harbor RSW test.

Mike Langslay said the next scheduled Portland District SRWG meeting will take place this afternoon; the main topic of discussion will be adult performance standards. The next

Portland District FFDRWG meeting is set for January 25. With respect to SRWG, we've been sending our proposals out, and that process is now essentially complete, Langslay said. We also need to schedule a final meeting at John Day or The Dalles some time in February, he added. It was agreed to schedule another SRWG meeting to discuss final proposals for February 16 at the Corps' Portland District headquarters.

5. Removable Spillway Weir Development and Funding.

At our December meeting, we discussed RSW sequencing, schedule and funding issues, said Hevlin; our hope is to work all of these issues out at today's meeting. The way we left it was that the Corps was going to take the discussion from the December meeting and try to reach some conclusions about how they want to proceed, Hevlin said.

John Kranda said the Corps has had a couple of in-house discussions on the RSW question since the last SCT meeting. He said funding and workload are concerns. Kranda suggested that a symposium focused on the biological issues associated with RSWs – transport vs. in-river, spring fish vs. summer fish, steelhead etc. – would be very helpful. While I've seen some very interesting biological information in the past few months, said Kranda, to me, at this point, the answers to some of the primary biological questions surrounding RSWs are more convoluted than black and white. Perhaps a special SRWG meeting or summit would be a way to reach scientific consensus, Kranda said. Russ Kiefer noted that he had proposed that type of symposium at a recent TMT meeting, focused primarily on the transport vs. in-river issue.

Having said that, and based on what we know now, I think we're still of the opinion that McNary, and the Lower River, are extremely important to focus on, said Kranda. Absent any significant additional information, I don't think the Corps is willing to back too far away from that position. Russ Kiefer reiterated that IDFG's position is that it makes more sense to complete RSW installation at all four Lower Snake projects before proceeding to McNary.

Kranda said he and his staff have presented the idea of proceeding with RSW design for McNary and Little Goose on parallel tracks to Corps Walla Walla District management, and were able to report that a more favorable CRFM work allowance should be available this year – closer to \$75 million, rather than \$70 million. One question is capability to work on both projects on parallel tracks; Walla Walla District is still working that out. However, the funding is there if we want to work on both RSWs on concurrent tracks.

Hevlin noted that it would appear that there will be enough funding available to collect the baseline data the Corps feels is important at Little Goose in 2005, as long as there is enough water in the basin to trigger spill at the Lower Snake collection dams.

The overall bottom line is that I can't give you a final answer from Corps management today, said Kranda; however, their decision should be available very soon. He noted that, even if the decision is made to proceed with Little Goose and McNary RSW design on parallel tracks, in FY'06, when the time comes to allocate construction dollars, there will likely be some hard choices to be made. Still, this might be at least an interim compromise, even if it just postpones

the final priority decision for a year.

The group devoted a lengthy discussion to the relative merits of RSW installation at McNary vs. Little Goose, with the various SCT participants re-stating their agencies' positions. Ultimately, Kiefer said Idaho is not ready, at this time, to agree to defer the prioritization decision for a year; he said he will need to speak to Idaho's IT representative to decide whether or not to elevate this issue to the IT. Hevlin said that, while he understands Idaho's position, his assessment of the situation is that if this issue goes to IT, the NOAA Fisheries position is likely to be that the parallel tracks approach makes sense. We agree that it makes sense to get the RSW installed at Little Goose as soon as possible, Hevlin said, but we don't agree that it makes sense to defer work on RSW design at McNary.

Kiefer reiterated that Idaho had agreed to let the action agencies decide on the relative priority of RSW installation at Little Goose or Lower Monumental, but that the agreement was that those two projects would be the next priorities for RSW construction – not McNary. He expressed dismay that the action agencies have chosen to breach that agreement by introducing McNary into the mix of potential RSW priorities, and said Idaho will be more cautious, in the future, in agreeing to these types of decisions.

In response to a question from Wills, the Corps said that, according to the contractor, Ice Harbor RSW upriver barging and installation is on track for this spring, although the current low flows in the river are a concern. However, barring significant problems, the RSW is on schedule for delivery to Ice Harbor by the third week in February. Modeling and design work on the Lower Monumental RSW is also progressing well. Design work should be completed in time to advertise the construction contract by the end of the FY'05 fiscal year, with contract award taking place about this time next year. That will give us a year, rather than 10 months, to complete construction, said the Corps representative, adding that the sooner the Little Goose vs. McNary decision is made, the better, in terms of staying on schedule. Lynn Reese added that the trip to WES is scheduled for the week of February 7; the attendees will be evaluating the Ice Harbor 2005 RSW test, the Lower Monumental RSW design, and Lower Granite summer spill test patterns.

6. Next SCT Meeting Date.

The next System Configuration Team meeting was set for Thursday, February 17. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.